

ORGANISATION EUROPEENNE DE LA C.M.T.

grouvant des organisations syndicales d'inspiration chrétienne et autres organisations démocratiques

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R E S O L U T I O N

"ELEMENTS FOR BUILDING A SOCIAL EUROPE"

331.881(25)

The European Organization of the W.C.L.

gathered in Luxemburg for its Second Congress,
from May 16th to May 19th 1972;

having been acquainted with the reports and their
conclusions, the whole of which are representing
the "Elements for building a social Europe";

acting in accordance with the General Resolution
adopted by the First Congress, which Resolution
recommended detailing, during the Second Congress,
a program with regard to the labour policy, the
policy with respect to the enterprise and the
policy in matters of income sharing;

has adopted the following Resolution:

The Congress is aware that the three main subjects treated
by the report and by the resolution show differing characteris-
tics. One can, nevertheless, observe a certain number of
common guiding lines.

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One meets everywhere the respect for men at work, for the worker taken both individually and collectively. By placing, implicitly and explicitly, Man in the centre of its perspective, this resolution rejoins the W.C.L.'s declaration of principle that also takes its inspiration from the image of Man granted the dignity to which he is entitled.

On the other hand, these "Elements for building a social Europe" are components of the whole vision of Society, such as said vision has been developed and accepted in the W.C.L.'s declaration of principle.

This means that the Congress rejects the neo-capitalist, technocratic and anonymous system existing and developing in Europe. It refuses integration in this system and strives, on the contrary, to replace this system by an economy satisfying actual needs, offering services, equal chances, by a prosperous economy, by a humane economy.

The European Organization of the W.C.L. wishes to achieve this goal by planned stages, by democratic means and by concerted trade-union action.

This is the manner in which the Congress has conceived the report and the resolution on the "Elements for building a social Europe".

The part to be played by trade-unionism in materializing these ambitious objectives will be of obvious importance.

Its action will largely determine the achievement of all legal, institutional and technical proposals detailed by the resolution. Trade-unionism will be able to play its part only by being strong and, above all, autonomous, always at the workers' service.

However, the workers of countries represented in the W.C.L. and in which countries liberty is non-existent, must be able to fight, with the assistance of the international labour movement, for the purpose of abolishing dictatorship and thus be able to participate in the construction of a social Europe.

I. A EUROPEAN LABOUR POLICY

1. Confronted with the aggravation of unemployment in certain European countries, with its permanency and its extent in other countries, the IInd Congress of the EO/WCL considers that one of European trade-unionism's essential tasks consists in developing action for the purpose of imposing everybody's right to work.
2. The EO/WCL emphasizes that labour policies applied up to now both on the level of individual countries and on that of the Community have been planned as remedies, either for correcting the effects of economic recession or for attenuating the labour market's defects.

In the EO/WCL's opinion, such repairing and adjusting policies remain indispensable but insufficient and they may not represent a purpose in themselves.

3. For the EO/WCL, the labour policy will have to pursue the following objectives:
 - the individual promotion for everybody;
 - the satisfaction of the whole of individual and collective needs.

On the other hand, such a policy will have to be a component of a general policy aimed at comprehensive, rational and well-adjusted use of natural, economic and human resources of a country or a group of countries.

4. It is of the opinion that the policy to be pursued in order to achieve full employment and best employment must consider, from the beginning, structural phenomena affecting the labour situation on all levels and in all areas, while it has to be included within a general policy defined in a model for development and that takes into account the needs of individuals and collectivities, wherever such needs become apparent.

5. This policy must be based, not on exclusive rentability and profitability objectives, but on the goal of ensuring the well-being of the workers and their families, may they be European citizens or immigrants from other countries. This orientation of the labour policy must, consequently, determine the investment policy, regionalization of activities and the latter's nature.

The EO/WCL emphasizes the urgency for creating jobs, in quantity and in quality, in regions affected by migration, by underdevelopment or threatened by depopulation. On the basis of this orientation will have to develop, at the service of the populations, the actions devoted to education, professional training and permanent education.

6. The EO/WCL requests a concertation of policies in favour of migrating workers, materialized or planned by the various countries.

It cannot separate the lot of workers originating from third countries from that of migrating workers from one of the Community's countries. This means that it takes position in favour of actual equality in treatment for all workers, on the social, trade-union, economic and political level.

7. In a communitarian perspective, the EO/WCL wishes:

- for a comprehensive and permanent inventory of labour problems, such as arising in the Member Countries and on the Community's level;
- for improved functioning of national labour services and of those set up in this area by the Community (in particular: the Permanent Labour Committee, the Consulting Committees, the European Communities' Bureau of Statistics);
- the EO/WCL insists that, in the very near future, political decisions be taken in view of progressively integrating the labour policies of the Member Countries, for the purpose of achieving one communitarian labour policy.

II. THE POLICY WITH REGARD TO THE ENTERPRISE

A. Participation or democratizing the enterprise

1. Both the capitalist enterprise and the economic system it represents are not democratic and therefore a source of alienation for the worker. Trade-union acquisitions and conquests with regard to the right to work and the social right have not been able to fundamentally change this situation.
2. Democratizing the enterprise will require setting up a type of equal social relationship in which each worker feels personally concerned by the activity of the enterprise and in which he finds, once more, by freely joining a collectivity, mastery over nature, the destination and the organization of labour. In this perspective, Man will recover his dignity, share in a production oriented for satisfying needs and place his capability and his creativeness at the collectivity's service.
3. Democratizing the enterprise cannot be ensured without actual democratization on all levels of political, economic and social life.
4. The EO/WCL recalls, that within the EO/WCL an agreement has been reached on the following items as preliminary conditions for any democratization or any participation within the enterprise:
 - the necessity for enterprises to acknowledge the trade-unions as spokesmen for the workers within the enterprise and to guarantee free exercise of trade-union rights within the enterprise;

- the necessity for acknowledging the trade-unions' right to negotiate European collective wage agreements and agreements in the enterprises;
- the right for trade-unions to dispose of objective information that can be checked;
- the right for trade-unions to be consulted for all important economic decisions and, particularly, those influencing employment and working conditions.

5. Consequently, the ED/WCL must disapprove of any "participation" formula with the single purpose, under the cover of extended responsibilities for workers, of leading to a participation in some decisions of lesser significance, without participation where essential decisions are concerned, by which would be created only an appearance of power, an illusion with great risks by integrating the workers' representatives in the general scheme of goals pursued by the enterprise while the decisions would be continually determined by the capitalist economy and enterprise. For this reason, it disapproves of worker/shareholder formulas.

6. On the positive side, the Congress notes that the current movement of Society's democratization emphasizes the workers' right to participation in the enterprise and in economic life.

In its opinion, participation on the industrial level tends to grant the workers as a group a real influence on the operation of the enterprise as well as on economic life. Participation means participating in decisions concerning the life of the enterprise in all of its aspects. Participation must allow workers to fully develop themselves within the enterprise, both personally and collectively. The power of influence and the possibility for development must be guaranteed by adequate participatory and democratic structures.

Participation thus conceived actually represents a collective power exercised by the workers opposing the employers' unilateral power and its consequences.

7. We note among quite different categories of workers, at the present time, a will to exert influence on shaping the decision on the level of the workshop or the office. Tests and actions carried out in this respect have revealed to what extent this change, quite limited within the authoritarian structures currently characterizing the enterprise, has been sufficient to stimulate the desire for participation in workers.

It would seem that participation on the level of the workshop will start a process that, in the long run and under favourable political conditions, must inexorably lead to forms of self-management within the enterprise, the industry, within Society.

8. This ideal of democratization will have to be materialized in stages: by continuously farther-reaching forms of participation, not alone on the level of the workshop, but also on the executive level of the enterprise. It is obvious that any participation on the workshop level will become significant and efficient only in relation with participation at the top.

This relationship between participation on the workshop level and participation at the top must be ensured by Enterprise Councils, both on the national level and for the European limited company. Their function must be strengthened and their information improved.

9. The possibility for workers to exert influence on the executive level of the enterprise may be materialized under various shapes of non-corporational relations between labour and capital, taking into account social, economic and political conditions prevailing in each country. The Congress thinks, in a general manner, that mean term construction of a different type of relationship between capital and labour should be pursued, with the understanding that, at no time, the workers may be relegated to a minority position. This problem arises most sharply in large enterprises and in holdings.

If, legally, the professional managers of the enterprise are responsible for managing the enterprise and determining its policy, the workers must be given the possibility to exercise an actual influence, too, on the shaping of decisions on the executive level of the enterprise. However, this participation may not imply co-management, in the word's positive and direct meaning, with regard to the management and the administration of the enterprise. This participation at the top implies a general right of supervision over the operation of the enterprise, a competency of authorization with regard to decisions of vital importance for the enterprise, in short, it will have to take the form of a body to which the management will be accountable. As we can see, this participation at the top opens a breach in current company law, which is unilateral, and it might pave the way for installing an enterprise law.

Materializing these objectives must be considered as a long term goal, i.e. the concept of the Community of workers' self-management in the enterprise, which requires a thorough change of existing structures.

10. Achieving this objective of democratization on the national level will follow specific ways in each country. On the European level, however, the Trade-Union Movement has made use of the project for the articles of a European limited company to take an unanimous European position in order to establish a law of the enterprise that will resolutely deviate from the law of the capital corporation, for the purpose of introducing into the European enterprise the European acknowledgment of the workers' representation. With regard to the status of the European limited company, both the ED/WCL and the ECFTU (CESL) have adopted an essentially quite similar position. The Congress here recalls the position taken by its Committee on April 28th 1971.

11. The EO/WCL wishes that the Trade-Union Movement may, in full autonomy, accompany this process of democratization, in the workers' best interests. For this purpose, it requests, in addition to objective information for the workers and the trade-unions, guarantees for the latters' part as spokesmen for the workers within the enterprise. As far as the EO/WCL is concerned, it will direct its efforts towards training the greatest possible number of workers in view of this participation.

B. Concentrations

1. The EO/WCL notes that the concentration of economic decisions, of production means, of financial and commercial means allows large enterprises, in an open economy system, to pursue an increasingly independent market strategy, to make inefficient or less efficient the instruments of participation available for the workers and the instruments of control available for government authorities, to take profit of the differences existing with regard to laws, to salaries, to working conditions, etc., and to, sometimes, use their power for direct interference in the policy of governments.
2. Consequently, it will be important to dispose of economic and social policy instruments with which the general interests can be made to prevail over individual interests: it is also important to strengthen trade-union action and to adjust said action to the dimension of the action scope of the enterprises.
3. The EO/WCL thinks that the instruments of a policy are the following:
 - a) preventive control over mergers must allow the economic policy the possibility to refuse authorization for any merger.

As a first step, the EO/WCL demands adopting EEC Regulations providing for obligatory previous reports on important mergers.

As a second step, the Community should be invested with the power to prohibit certain mergers (or to impose certain de-mergers) when industrial or financial empires threaten the interests of the workers, of the consumers or the means of action of public authorities.

- b) it will be important to be in a position of subordinating the policies of large conglomerates to the decisions of the economic and social policy (monetary control, planning, credit policy, prices, investments, participation of workers, tax laws, etc.);
- c) before any merger, whatever its shape and whatever the nationality of the enterprises involved may be, the elected representatives of the workers and the trade-union delegates must be informed of the reasons, the modalities and of the probable effects of the merger.

Negotiations with regard to the steps to be taken in order to counter-act negative repercussions must take place between the management and the workers' representatives.

- d) it becomes increasingly urgent to efficiently coordinate trade-union action facing centralized management of vast conglomerates. Currently, the most profitable, if provisional, solution would seem to set up flexible and intermediate trade-union organizations capable of adjusting to any new change in the companies' structure.

Coordinating work and information must be facilitated by creating, at the earliest possible moment, a "trade-union data bank".

C. Multinational Companies

1. The EO/WCL, concerned by the extension of the hold exerted by multinational companies on national economies and by the serious consequences of this situation, both for the democratic future of economic and social structures and for the liberty of the individual, has decided to devote special attention to this phenomenon, its causes and its consequences.
2. The development of multinational companies, of industrial and financial conglomerates will have serious consequences:
 - repercussions on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the labour situation;
 - shifting the centres of decisions from the national level to the European level, or outside of Europe;
 - precarious features of the economic independence of Europe in the areas of research, of technology and of investments;
 - economic development oriented exclusively by capitalist forces because of the fact, that the control over multinational companies escapes the hand of national political authorities and that there is no supranational political power on the European level;
 - increased exploiting of the riches of the Third World with regard to raw materials and labour, and will for both economic and political domination of these Governments.
3. Efforts of information and of sensitization will be particularly undertaken in the subsidiaries of multinational companies.
Special information will be forwarded to the militants of such subsidiaries in order to allow them to adjust their militant action to the strategies of multinational companies.

4. Flexible and adjustable structures will be set up; they will establish contacts between the trade-union bodies of the various subsidiaries for the purpose of coordinating, through a systematic exchange of information, the actions undertaken and thus achieve true solidarity on an international level.
5. In the EO/WCL's opinion it will be necessary to start investigations on the structures and strategies of multinational companies, in such a manner that the trade-union strategy will not only respond to but anticipate the practices of international capitalist groups.

III. THE POLICY IN MATTERS OF INCOME SHARING

1. The EO/WCL has no use for a so-called "income" policy with no other purpose than slowing salary increases or fighting out inflationist movements on the workers' backs. With regard to inflationist movements, both the governments and the EEC authorities are trying to remedy this situation without having previously established a thorough inventory of the actual and multiple causes for inflation.
2. The EO/WCL notes, as a matter of fact, that the multiple policies applied by the Community, by the governments and by the enterprises influence factually, directly or indirectly, the formation of assets, and that they consider the sharing of income all too frequently as a result and not as an objective per se.
3. The EO/WCL cannot agree but to a coherent social-economic policy with the purpose of sharing, by direct and by indirect means, national income and riches on an improved basis of equality. Under current conditions, this means demanding improved equality as to income.
4. In fact, a true policy of just and structural repartition of total income supposes:
 - an accurate acquaintance with salary and non-salary income as a whole;
 - an accurate acquaintance with the effects of direct and indirect taxes on the income of the various social-professional categories;
 - a true political will to review current disparity and injustice in income sharing, and particularly tax law violations within the countries as well as between different countries (e.g.: "tax paradise countries" and tax practices of multinational companies);

- in addition, the level, the amount, the place and the use of public and private investments must also be taken into account when elaborating a policy of this nature.

5. The EO/WCL thinks that, with regard to materializing a policy of this nature, the trade-union movement will have to play a part in conformity with its task and its responsibility, while retaining its full autonomy.
6. In the EO/WCL's opinion, materializing such a policy will require that the premises for income repartition and the changes implied be quite closely supervised. Thus will be prevented the development of a situation in which, under the pretext of searching for greater justice and equality in income, we arrive at an opposite result namely, that even without work, the rich will get even more rich.
7. On the trade-union level, the EO/WCL believes in the necessity for internal coordination, in adjusting policies and above all, in data exchange among trade-union organizations on regional and sectorial levels, for the purpose of achieving a change in the repartition of income on the European level.

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